



The historic Deuel cabin (at left and below) is currently being dismantled, but will soon be reassembled on the plaza between the LDS Church museum and genealogical library.



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Utah's oldest house — or one of the oldest — has a way of disappearing and reappearing in a different spot. A log structure, the Deuel cabin, as it is known, currently is in a disappearing mode but it will materialize again soon to be maintained as a permanent exhibit on the plaza between the Museum of Church History and Art and the new Genealogical Building, west of Temple Square on West Temple.

For 61 years, the cabin stood on Temple Square, behind the old Bureau of Information Building. There it was viewed by millions of tourists from all parts of the world as well as by countless local people.

If you've got  
cabin fever,  
get out and



Originally, it was part of the pioneer fort built in 1847, on the block now known as Pioneer Park. Another structure built at the same time, the Levi E. Riter cabin, also has been preserved and can be seen at Pioneer Trails State Park at the mouth of Emigration Canyon.

The Deuel cabin was recently dismantled so that the logs could be treated with weatherproofing material. The cabin then will be restored as nearly as possible to its original condition, inside and out, explained Don Enders, curator of the log home exhibit. He expects the work to be completed by the end of September.

No protective canopy will be built over the cabin. Its landscaping will consist of native plants, providing a "nature trail" exhibit on the plaza. The cabin's interior furnishings will be authentic to the pioneer period and the area in front of the cabin will be utilized for demonstrations of pioneer crafts such as weaving and adobe making. About every two years, the cabin will be re-chinked as a part of the on-going pioneer crafts exhibit, Enders said.

Built of Douglas fir found in the lower elevations of the nearby canyons, the cabin may have been completed before the arrival of the Deuels in the Salt Lake Valley in October 1847. Construction of housing began soon after the arrival of the first company of pioneers on July 24.

Although they were well-off by pioneer standards, brothers Osmyn and William Deuel and their families had to share the cabin, housing being in short supply. Their wives, Mary and Eliza, were sisters which may have eased the tensions of sharing a 15- by 20-foot, one-room cabin. William and Eliza had two daughters, aged one and four, and were expecting a third child. Osmyn and Mary were childless.

The two families stayed in the cabin through the winter but moved north into what is now Davis County in the

# visit a few

spring. They established Deuel Settlement, now known as Centerville, according to research done by the museum staff. The cabin was acquired in 1849 by Albert Carrington, later an LDS apostle. He moved it from the fort to his own land on First North and West Temple.

The Carrington family gave the structure to the Church in 1912, and, for a time, it was a part of the Deseret Museum located in the Vermont Building. Two years later, the cabin was moved to Temple Square, remaining there until 1976, when it was placed in storage. About a year ago, it was moved to the plaza but was covered by a protective structure. In September, it will become a full-fledged exhibit of pioneer life.

In addition to the Deuel and Riter cabins, numerous log cabins are on display in parks and other suitable sites in towns throughout the state. Some 27 of these are owned and maintained by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.

In addition, a considerable number of pioneer log cabins still may be in use as homes. They are not recognizable as log cabins, ordinarily, additions having been built onto them, and the logs having been covered with siding. A cabin in Cache Valley, still occupied, is not covered with siding but with climbing vines. Pioneer-type log structures — not the modern factory-made type — still were being built in Utah as late as the thirties, according to Tom Carter, log cabin expert of the State Historical Society.

Log barns and outbuildings are not uncommon in Utah's

rural areas today, and many cabins that once were homes now languish as storage sheds behind modern houses. One such structure is located not far from downtown Salt Lake City, on property owned by Mrs. June Maack.

Known as the William Hawk cabin, the building is on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built some time between 1848 and 1853 and was occupied through 1884, says Stephanie Churchill of the Utah Heritage Foundation.

At some point in more recent years, garage doors were installed in one end of the cabin so it could shelter an automobile. Still, it stands solidly, guarded by a pair of watchdogs, and cluttered with castoffs of our throwaway society along with memories of days when life was simpler.

Undoubtedly, each of the surviving cabins has its story — maybe many stories — but, unfortunately, not all are remembered. One venerable log house is known to have inspired a song. The Charles W. Penrose cabin, preserved in Farmington, Davis County, was built for the young immigrant from Britain by his friends.

Their hearts were right but their workmanship apparently left something to be desired, for one night a powerful east wind blew in the door and the windows. While his wife tried to keep their small baby warm in the bed, Penrose struggled in the dark to nail quilts over the openings to keep the icy gale out.

Not long after this incident, Penrose, on a mission to England, wrote a poem that subsequently was set to music, "Blow Gently Ye Wild Winds, My Loved Ones Are There." Others of his writings have become better known as hymns still sung by Mormon congregations. He later became editor of the Deseret News and a member of the First Presidency of the church.

Although the log cabin has become accepted as a symbol of the pioneers, pioneer leader Brigham Young disliked log cabins and urged the settlers not to build them. He objected to log construction on esthetic and conservation grounds.

In a discourse at Logan, in June of 1860, he said, "I do not wish the brethren to cut all the timber to put it into log-houses. Erect saw-mills and make lumber, which will be far better than building log-houses. We have no timber to waste. We should save our timber, and make buildings that will look better than log-houses, and at the same time be easier and quicker built."

He might be amazed at the respect paid the lowly log cabin today by people who live in houses of brick, lumber, aluminum, concrete, steel — and vinyl.